The best and the brightest

From the desk of *Roundup* writer Eric Raub

Over the past three months I have had the privilege of working in the Public Affairs Office and on the Space Center Roundup with Julie Burt and Melissa Davis. I have learned a great deal from the experience, although probably the most important thing I have learned is how important the people of JSC are to making the space program newsworthy.

As the staff writer for the Roundup my primary assignment has been to tell stories. These stories have come from people in various directorates and involved breakthrough technologies, stellar human achievements and sometimes people just having a lot of fun. No matter what the accomplishment or the event, all of the stories had an easily identifiable force behind them–people who love what they do.

I cannot leave without taking the opportunity to thank everyone who set aside time in their busy schedule to talk to me about their work and show me facilities and laboratories I had never seen before. I wish I had the time to learn about everyone's achievements at JSC, but I don't think I would get very far before the people at the beginning would be celebrating something new. That is one of the greatest aspects of working here I have seen during this summer. Plus, it made the task of finding something interesting to write about very easy.

Since my first work tour in 1996, JSC has safely seen the Space Shuttle launch more than two dozen times and firmly established the largest orbiting laboratory and human outpost ever seen in space. Little wonder then that JSC has remained on the front page of my imagination for years, and I know I am not alone.

If you need proof of this, your workplace is about to be inundated with more than 100,000 living, breathing pieces of evidence. In two weeks, on Aug. 25, JSC will host Open House 2001–one of the most important events of the year.

Almost all of the work I have done on the last Roundup issued before I leave has been on Open House. The timing has worked out perfectly, and I couldn't have asked for a better assignment before my work tour ends.

I know how important Open House is to JSC, the surrounding community and visitors from around the country and the globe. It is the time to make headlines in the minds of people young and old and from various cultures and backgrounds.

When the guests are standing in front of you listening and watching what you do, I know they will remember the stories you tell them as long as I'll remember the ones I've heard.

Co-ops complete summer work tours

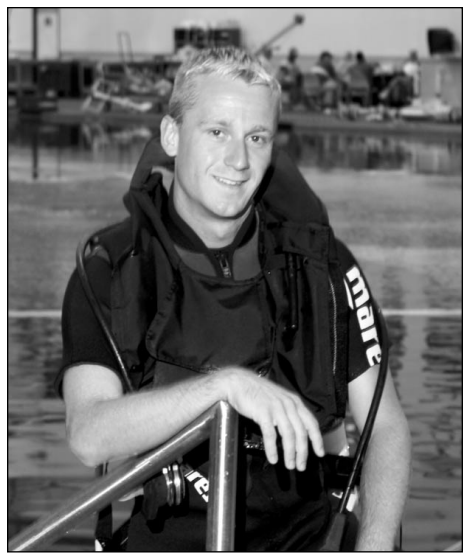
By Nicholas Saadah

As the summer draws to a close, many JSC Cooperative Education Program students (Co-ops) are wrapping up their projects and preparing to return to school. Now almost four decades old, the Co-op Program continues to be JSC's primary link to the academic world.

"We hire the best of the best," said Bob Musgrove, Co-op Program Manager. "JSC recruits at top-ranked universities nationwide and easily attracts a diverse group of college students who've proven year after year to be our best source for entry-level permanent hires."

Valparaiso University senior Nicholas Skytland spends his time working as a flight lead at the Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory. In addition to coordinating astronaut-training classes, Skytland says the best part of his job is being able to observe training exercises while diving in the 6.2 million-gallon tank. He can hardly believe where he is working and what he is doing as a Co-op.

"Everyday I have to pinch myself to make sure that I am actually driving to work at the Johnson Space Center,"

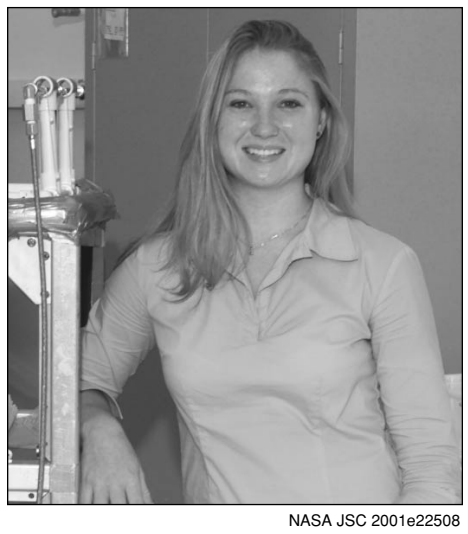


NASA JSC 2001e22506

Nick Skyland (DXI) spent the summer working at the NBL.

Skytland said. "I had the chance to sit right behind the astronauts and watch them practice. I don't think a lot of people can say that."

Other Co-ops take to the skies with their projects. Jessica Badger, a University of Texas at Austin senior, spent the summer designing a leak-detection experiment that will fly on the KC-135 microgravity simulator in the coming weeks. Badger feels that the hands-on nature of her project in a professional engineering environment helped her gain knowledge in engineering



NASA JSC 2001e22508

Jessica Badger (EC3) stands beside the hardware she built that will fly on the KC-135.

that she cannot learn at school.

"I feel that learning to work as a team with other professional engineers is a huge advantage of participation in the Co-op Program," Badger said.

One of the most attractive aspects of the Co-op Program is the level of responsibility given to participating students. Lisa Zito, a Penn State University junior, spent the summer working in the Space Operations Procurement Office

NASA JSC 2001e22509

Lisa Zito (BN) supported contract negotiations this summer.

performing contract administration functions on a $4.6 billion federal government contract.

Zito calls working at JSC the most rewarding experience of her life, and is amazed when she thinks that a part that she helped buy is essential to the functioning of the International Space Station (ISS).

Sabrina Singh, Georgia Institute of Technology junior, became certified as an instructor in a Part Task Trainer course taught to both astronauts and flight controllers. Singh enjoyed the dual nature of her job and believes the two functions work well together.

NASA JSC 2001e22540

Sabrina Singh (DT4) was certified on a PTT course this summer.

"The final product of instructing crewmembers and flight controllers will be the perfect mix of a technical job in a people oriented environment," Singh said.

While primarily composed of engineering and business majors, the Co-op Program involves students studying several unique fields. Thad Roberts, a University of Utah senior, is a geology major who spent the summer working as an experimental petrologist. His project

NASA JSC 2001e22507

Thad Roberts (SN2) worked as a petrologist this summer.

involved investigating the formation of rock samples to gain valuable information about Martian geology.

Roberts described his project as a very hands-on job, which encouraged out of the box thinking. He said working at NASA provided him with the science and the adventure that he had hoped for.

Some Co-ops enjoyed their undergraduate tours so much they decided to continue as Co-ops through graduate school. Two of these graduate Co-ops are Sarah Graybeal and Nicholas Saadah, both of whom will start graduate school at Stanford University this fall. They spent the summer working on

NASA JSC 2001e22510

Nicholas Saadah and Sarah Graybeal (DM4) worked in flight design this summer.

software, which will someday be certified for use in the Mission Control Center.

"It's not just the work or the glamour of being at NASA that brings me back –it's the people," Graybeal said. "Employees here are excited about their jobs, and that makes work a lot more fun."

Nationwide interest in the JSC Co-op Program continues to grow as more students realize the value of work experience.

"It's a two-way street," Musgrove said. "Students benefit from real-world work experience that complements their formal education, while the Center benefits from both the work the Co-ops do while they're here, and the opportunity to see a potential future employee in action before making a long-term commitment.

"It's a win-win situation when we convert a Co-op to a permanent JSC employee." ■

Photos by David DeHoyos